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Wolfgang Friedmann: 1907-1972

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WOLFGANG FRIEDMANN

1907-1972

On September 20, 1972, Wolfgang Friedmann was stabbed to death a few blocks from the Columbia Law School where he had taught for a generation.

Death of an outstanding scholar is always sad. Death by violence is particularly sad. But Professor Friedmann's death is tragic.

Though driven from his homeland by the mindless forces of the Third Reich, he retained and taught a philosophy of peace and justice. His positions with the United States and later with the United Nations gave him ample opportunity for vengeance, but he understood the flaws in the human condition and stayed his hand. He condemned not only discrimination against minorities in his new land, but also ad hoc treatment of enemies in his old land.

He taught his students much about law, but more about justice. His finest gift to students was not his brilliant mind or his splendid scholarship, but rather the example of his own life.

Michael Botein